

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3208

S E C R E T ALGIERS 3136

NODIS/CHEROKEE

DEPT PASS USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, AG, ME

SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE

1. AMBASSADOR PARKER AND I WERE RECEIVED ALONE BY PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE, WITH ONLY HIS ARABIC TRANSLATOR PRESENT, FOR ABOUT ONE AND THREE QUARTERS HOURS AT MIDDAY TODAY, OCTOBER 21.

2. AFTER CONVEYING GREETINGS FROM PRESIDENT FORD AND WARM PERSONAL REGARDS FROM YOU TO BOUMEDIENE, I EXPLAINED THAT SINCE I HAD TO BE IN NORTH AFRICA FOR MEETING OF US-TUNISIAN JOINT COMMISSION, YOU HAD SUGGESTED I VISIT ALGIERS TO CONVEY TO HIM YOUR PRESENT ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE STRATEGY WITH REGARD TO THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. I TOLD HIM YOU ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO HIS JUDGEMENTS AND THAT I WOULD BE HAPPY TO CONVEY TO YOU ANY THOUGHTS HE WISHED ME TO.

3. I SAID I WOULD ALSO BE GOING TO MOROCCO AND THAT, WHILE THIS VISIT HAD BEEN PLANNED BEFORE THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE SAHARA, I ANTICIPATED THAT THOSE DEVELOPMENTS WOULD INEVITABLY FIGURE IN MY TALKS IN MOROCCO. I WOULD, THEREFORE, WELCOME BOUMEDIENE'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SAHARA SITUATION AND ANY UNDERSTANDING OF THE ALGERIAN POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE SAHARA WHICH HE WOULD LIKE TO CONVEY

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TO ME. I WILL BE REPORTING THAT PART OF THE CONVERSATION

IN A SEPARATE TELEGRAM.

4. WITH RESPECT TO THE MIDDLE EAST, I MADE A DETAILED PRESENTATION FOLLOWING CLOSELY THE TALKING POINTS YOU APPROVED. BOUMEDIENE LISTENED CLOSELY AND INTERRUPTED ME ONLY TWICE. THE FIRST TIME WAS TO HAVE ME REPEAT THE SENTENCE THAT REFERS TO THE NEED TO BRING ABOUT A PEACE SETTLEMENT WHICH, WHILE PRESERVING ISRAEL'S SECURE EXISTENCE, WILL ALSO MEET THE FUNDAMENTAL LEGITIMATE INTERESTES OF THE ARAB WORLD INCLUDING THOSE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. THE PRESIDENT ASKED WHETHER YOUR INSTRUCTIONS USED THE PHRASE "PALESTINIAN PEOPLE." WHEN I AFFIRMED THAT THEY DID, HE INDICATED HE THOUGHT THIS WAS IMPORTANT.

5. BOUMEDIENE ALSO INTERRUPTED AT THE POINT WHERE I STATED THAT THERE SEEMS TO BE GENERAL RECOGNITION, INCLUDING ON THE PART OF THE SOVIETS, THAT A MOVE DIRECTLY TO GENEVA WITHOUT ADEQUATE PREPARATION COULD LEAD TO A STALEMATE THERE. HE SAID THAT THE SOVIETS WERE NOT HAPPY AT HAVING BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE RECENT NEGOTIATIONS AND EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT IF THE US AND SOVIET APPROACH TO A SETTLEMENT DIVERGED THIS COULD HAVE ADVERSE EFFECTS IN THE AREA. I TOLD HIM WE RECOGNIZED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD VALID INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THAT THERE COULD ONLY BE A SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFLICT THERE IF IT HAD THE SUPPORT OF BOTH THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION. WE DID NOT SEEK TO EXCLUDE THE SOVIETS FROM A LEGITIMATE ROLE AND VIEWED OUR PART IN THE RECENT NEGOTIATIONS AS WELL AS THE SINAI AGREEMENT AS AN ESSENTIAL STEP IN LAYING THE GOROUND WORK FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT, ACHIEVEMENT OF WHICH WOULD REQUIRE BOTH US AND SOVIET SUPPORT.

6. AFTER HEARING ALL OF MY PRESENTATION, BOUMEDIENE STARTED OF BY ASKING WHETHER WE ENVISAGED PROCESS OF NEGOTIATING OVERALL SETTLEMENT TO START BEFORE OR AFTER 1976 ELECTIONS. I SAID WE HOPED NEGOTIATING PROCESS COULD BE CONTINUED SOON IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AND WERE COMMITED TO CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS, BUT DID NOT THINK IT REALISTIC TO EXPECT ANY DRAMATIC RESULTS UNTIL 1977.

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7. BOUMEDIENE THEN BEGAN USUAL PHILOSOPHICAL SURVEY OF PROBLEM, GIVING US CREDIT FOR WITHDRAWING FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA AND FOR MAKING REAL EFFORT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT NEAR EAST. SAID ALGERIA HAD NOT OPPOSED OUR EFFORTS IN LATTER REGARD, ALTHOUGH IT COULD HAVE DONE SO EASILY HAD IT WANTED. HE WAS BOTHERED BY SINAI II, HOWEVER, AND HAD TOLD SADAT AT KAMPALA THAT IT WOULD EXPOSE HIM TO ATTACK BY OTHER ARABS. SADAT HAD SAID HE PREPARED TAKE THAT RISK. HE WAS ALSO BOTHERED

BY PROPOSED USE OF AMERICAN TECHNICIANS. KILLING OF TWO OR THREE AMERICANS WOULD HAVE GREAT IMPACT ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION. HE HAD ASKED SECRETARY ONCE IF WE WANTED LASTING PEACE OR PAX AMERICANA IN REGION. LATTER WAS NOT IN US INTERESTS. SADAT, BECAUSE OF SINAI II, NOW RISKED BEING IDENTIFIED AS USG'S MAN, AND HIS OPTIONS RAPIDLY DIMINISHING AS RESULT.

8. BOUMEDIENE CONTINUED THAT QUESTION WAS WHETHER THIS SITUATION WOULD SIT STILL FOR YEAR AND A HALF OR TWO YEARS. HE DOUBTED IT. EGYPTIAN PEOPLE WERE DOCILE, SYRIANS WERE NOT. LATTER WERE EXPERTS AT COUPS AND SYRIAN GOVERNMENT LIKELY TO BE OVERTHROWN IF THERE NO PROGRESS TOWARDS SETTLEMENT. NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE EXTREMIST. AS FOR PALESTINIANS, NOTHING WAS MORE DIFFICULT FOR REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION THAN TO STAND STILL. IN ABSENCE TANGIBLE PROGRESS, MOVEMENT WOULD SPLIT UP INTO EXTREMIST GROUPS UNDER NO CENTRAL CONTROL, AND IN CASE OF DISPUTE BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND EGYPTIANS, ALGERIA WOULD HAVE TO SUPPORT FORMER. IT WOULD BE HARMFUL TO EVERYONE'S INTEREST. BOUMEDIENE SAID "PLEASE TELL SECRETARY HE MUST FIND WAY TO FILL THE VOID" (IMPLICATION WAS THAT EVEN IF PROGRESS MORE APPARENT THAN REAL, THAT WOULD HELP.)

9. I EXPLAINED THAT WE HAD NOT SOUGHT TO PUT AMERICANS IN SINAI BUT THAT THIS HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO OBTAIN THE AGREEMENT. FACT WAS, HOWEVER, THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT MORE THAN ANY OTHER HAD CONTRIBUTED TO NEW US PERCEPTIONS OF PROBLEM, WHICH WERE CREATING FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE TOWARD FINAL SETTLEMENT. WE REGRETTED FACT THAT SINAI II HAD HAD DIVISIVE EFFECT AMONG ARABS, WHICH HAD NOT BEEN OUR INTENTION. REEMPHASIZING NEED FOR PATIENCE AND HOPE THAT BOUMEDIENE WOULD CONTINUE COUNSEL REALISM IN ARAB WORLD, I SAID IT WOULD BE TRAGEDY IF, AFTER
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QUARTER OF CENTURY, THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE WERE LOST BECAUSE OF NEED FOR ANOTHER YEAR AND A HALF'S TIME. BOUMEDIENE SAID LAUGHINGLY THAT HE HOPED OUR ELECTIONS CAME OUT RIGHT, AND CONCLUDED BY ASKING THAT I URGE YOU TO FIND A WAY TO FILL THE VOID. I SAID I WOULD CONVEY HIS VIEWS TO YOU AND KNEW THEY WOULD BE APPRECIATED.
PARKER

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